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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5616
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0477
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/IPA-PAYTON, NEA/ELA
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2018

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SUBJECT: IRAQI D/FM ABBAWI SEES SUPPORTING ABBAS AS KEY
OBJECTIVE AT NOV 26 AL MINISTERIAL

REF: STATE 123317

Classified By: Classified by CDA Maura Connelly for reasons 1.5 b and d
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¶1. (C) At Embassy Baghdad's request, we delivered reftel demarche November 22 to Iraqi D/FM Abbawi, who was in Damascus attending the November 21 Iraqi Neighbors Border Security Working Group (BSWG) and would be heading the Iraqi delegation at the November 26 Arab League Ministerial. Abbawi expressed general support for U.S. objectives and said PA President Mahmoud Abbas' attendance at the ministerial would be important. Abbawi pledged to deflect any criticism of Abbas and to highlight Abbas's important efforts to promote Palestinian reconciliation and achieve an agreement on the creation of a Palestinian state.

¶2. (C) Abbawi commented that Abbas's recent four-point proposal (which Hamas Politburo chief Khaled Meshaal subsequently rejected) represented yet another extended hand by Fatah. Abbawi asserted now would be a good time to press Arab League Chairman Amr Moussa to make good on a previous pledge to hold accountable those responsible for the breakdown in Palestinian reconciliation discussions. Though Abbawi remained skeptical that the Arab League would actually single Hamas out for its role in scuttling Egyptian-brokered talks, he said it would be important to push the Arab League on this point to bolster Abbas' position.

¶3. (C) Abbawi added Iraq wanted to be supportive of Egyptian mediation efforts, since this process represented the best hope for achieving Palestinian unity and re-establishing a cease fire in Gaza. Eventually, he argued, the various Palestinian factions would have to be in agreement in order to achieve statehood. At the same time, Abbawi said it would be important for the PA-Israeli negotiations to continue so that there was an established process for the new U.S. administration to pick up after taking office.

¶4. (SBU) Embassy Baghdad cleared on this message.
CONNELLY